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ON PAGE **A-9**

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Excerpts From Executive Order on Secrecy Rules

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WASHINGTON, April 2 — Following are excerpts from an executive order issued by President Reagan today on the classification of information involving national security.

This order prescribes a uniform system for classifying, declassifying and safeguarding national security information. It recognizes that it is essential that the public be informed concerning the activities of its Govern-

ment, but that the interests of the United States and its citizens require that certain information concerning the national defense and foreign relations be protected against unauthorized disclosure. Information may not be classified under this order unless its disclosure reasonably could be expected to cause damage to the national security.

NOW, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Original Classification

Classification Levels

(a) National security information (hereinafter "classified information") shall be classified at one of the following three levels:

(1) "Top Secret" shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause exceptionally grave damage to the national security.

(2) "Secret" shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause serious damage to the national security.

(3) "Confidential" shall be applied to information, the unauthorized disclosure of which reasonably could be expected to cause damage to the national security.

(b) Except as otherwise provided by statute, no other terms shall be used to identify classified information.

(c) If there is reasonable doubt about the need to classify information, it shall be safeguarded as if it were classified pending a determination by an original classification authority who shall make this determination within thirty (30) days. If there is reasonable doubt about the appropriate level of classification, it shall be safeguarded at the higher level of classification pending a determination by an original classification authority who shall make this determination within thirty (30) days.

Classification Authority

(a) Top Secret. The authority to classify information originally as Top Secret may be exercised only by:

(1) the President;
(2) agency heads and officials designated by the President in the Federal Register; and

(3) officials delegated this authority pursuant to Section 1.2(d).

(b) Secret. The authority to classify information originally as Secret may be exercised only by:

(1) agency heads and officials designated by the President in the Federal Register;

(2) officials with original Top Secret classification authority; and

(3) officials delegated such authority pursuant to Section 1.2(d).

(c) Confidential. The authority to classify information originally as Confidential may be exercised only by:

(1) agency heads and officials designated by the President in the Federal Register;

(2) officials with original Top Secret or Secret classification authority; and

(3) officials delegated such authority pursuant to Section 1.2(d).

(d) Delegation of Original Classification Authority.

(1) Delegations of original classification authority shall be limited to the minimum required to administer this order. Agency heads are responsible for insuring that designated subordinate officials have a demonstrable and continuing need to exercise this authority.

Classification Categories

(a) Information shall be considered for classification if it concerns:

(1) military plans, weapons or operations;

(2) the vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, projects or plans relating to the national security;

(3) foreign government information;

(4) intelligence activities (including special activities), or intelligence sources or methods;

(5) foreign relations or foreign activities of the United States;

(6) scientific, technological or economic matters relating to the national security;

(7) United States Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities;

(8) cryptology;

(9) a confidential source; or

(10) other categories of information that are related to the national security and that require protection against unauthorized disclosure as determined by the President or by agency heads or other officials who have been delegated original classification authority by the President. Any determination made under this subsection shall be reported promptly to the Director of the Information Security Oversight Office.

(b) Information that is determined to concern one or more of the categories in Section 1.3(a) shall be classified when an original classification authority also determines that its unauthorized disclosure, either by itself or in the context of other information, reasonably could be expected to cause damage to the national security.

(c) Unauthorized disclosure of foreign government information, the identity of a confidential foreign source or intelligence sources or methods is presumed to cause damage to the national security.

(d) Information classified in accordance with Section 1.3 shall not be declassified automatically as a result of any unofficial publication or inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure in the United States or abroad of identical or similar information.

Limits on Classification

(a) In no case shall information be classified in order to conceal violations of law, inefficiency or administrative error; to prevent embarrassment to a person, organization or agency; to restrain competition; or to prevent or delay the release of information that does not require protection in the interest of national security.

(b) Basic scientific research information not clearly related to the national security may not be classified.

(c) The President or an agency head or official designated under Sections 1.2(a)(2), 1.2(b)(1) or 1.2(c)(1) may reclassify information previously declassified and disclosed if it is determined in writing that (1) the information requires protection in the interest of national security, and (2) the information may reasonably be recovered. These reclassification actions shall be

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